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BOOK REVIEWS

The Free Negro in Maryland, 1634-1860. By James M. Wright, Ph.D. [Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. XCVII, No. 3]. (New York: Columbia University, 1921. pp. 362).

So numerous, so important, and so complex were the problems arising out of negro slavery that one important accompaniment of the slave system has been given comparatively little attention by most investigators. What to do with the free negro was a question, the solution of which inevitably presented many difficulties in any state or community where both slaves and free negroes existed in considerable numbers. In Maryland, more than in most of the other slaveholding states, the embarrassments of the free negro problem were many and puzzling. Dr. Wright has made this side-issue of slavery the theme of arduous research in newspapers, public documents and records, reports of conventions and committees, wills, deeds, and other important source material. A bibliography of fifteen pages enumerates these sources, together with many investigations of other writers on slavery and the negro.

Unfortunately there is no index. The reviewer has forgotten who it was who said that an index to a book is unnecessary, for if a reader has not sufficient intelligence to know, from the field covered by a book and from the chapter headings, in what part he will find information on any topic, he does not deserve consideration. Such a view, which seems to be held by a great many authors and publishers today, is as reasonable and as sound as it would be to argue that a catalog of a library is useless, for the librarian is supposed to know what books the library contains. If a student consults Dr. Wright's treatise for information concerning the property rights of free negroes, for example, may he assume that all information on this point will be found under "Property Acquisition and Holdings," or should he read also the chap-

ter on "Legal Status of the Free Negro," or must he examine the entire book? We should like to see courses in index-making and the importance of indexes included in every college curriculum, especially in the departments of history.

The book is a repository of innumerable facts bearing on different phases of the free negro problem. There is little or no generalization concerning the facts, and, except in the brief Introduction and Conclusion, little summary or discussion of the issues of "free negroism" as a whole. With the statistical tables which accompany the text, and the vast body of statistics and records of laws and transactions included in the text itself, the work makes available much important material for later writers.

Several chapters of the monograph are devoted to the various causes which gave rise to an unusually large number of free negroes in Maryland, and the methods of transferring slaves to the free class. The many attempts that were made to check the growth of the free negro population, including the visionary colonization schemes, also receive due attention. Other chapters discuss the free negro's legal status and rights, his position in the economic and industrial world, his social condition, his education, and his relations with the church. Industrially, the negro was employed not only in the heavier forms of manual labor, but in nearly all the trades, and was depended on for the skilled as well as the common labor ("As tonsorial artists," we are told, "negroes were hardly surpassed by any in the state." We should have been grateful for quotation marks about this ostentatious appellation, so dear to the negro barber, to avoid giving it the dignity of adoption in a serious historical study). Socially, his position was but little more enviable than the position of the slaves, and because of his nature and antecedents, as well as the prejudice against him, his opportunity for advancement was little better than the slave's.

One of the most interesting and most important chapters is the one on "Legal Status of the Free Negro." Many were the laws which were passed, defining and restricting the rights of the negroes, and even the privilege of slave-owners

in respect to manumission of their slaves. As late as the constitutional convention of 1850-51, "in drafting a provision against the exercise of arbitrary authority against persons and property, the word 'freeman' was objected to, because it was urged that its insertion might preclude action, in case the state should desire to banish a certain portion of its population. In order to remove doubts as to this point, an amendment was added to the clause declaring that it was not to be held to prevent the legislature from regulating and disposing of the colored population 'as they may see fit.' "

The author divides the history of free negroes in Maryland into two periods, "one before, the other after the general emancipation of the civil war period." His work deals only with the first period. It may be regretted that he did not extend this to the actual year of emancipation (1864) instead of stopping at 1860. What part was taken by the free negroes in the civil war, and how the negro's position was affected by the war, would have been interesting points for inclusion, as the final phase of "free negroism" before general emancipation and reconstruction. But Dr. Wright's researches have been so diligent, and the published result is so replete both with facts and with citations of sources, that all future investigators of negro history and slavery will be under great indebtedness to him. C. S. T.

The Founding of New England. By James Truslow Adams. (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, c 1921. pp. XI, 482).

At the risk of irrelevancy, a review of this book may well begin with a word of welcome to the publishers. In the last two or three years the Atlantic Monthly Press has been rapidly advancing to a rank in the publishing of books, which compares very favorably with the high standing of the famous periodical from which it takes its name. The work before us is its first contribution to the class of painstaking historical investigation. It is to be hoped that the book is not merely a result of tercentenary interest in Pilgrim ancestry, but a forerunner of other studies as excellent as this.